

PRESENT EXIGENCIES OF THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE.

AN

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED IN

TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON,

ON

SABBATH EVENING, NOVEMBER 23, 1845.

BY REV. E. H. CHAPIN.

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ADDRESS.

THE word REFORM is one of deep and pregnant meaning. It implies something more than a *change, a revolution*. It combines the ideas of *destruction* and *construction*. That error, this sin, is to be abolished; but a better force, a new and true institution, is to be erected in its stead. It is obvious, then, that all Reforms, all *moral* Reforms, must be slow in their operation, and liable to vicissitudes. The adversaries which they have to oppose are stronger than enrolled armies, and hosts of steel. They encounter customs, prejudices, sins, that are entrenched in the whole sentiment, manifested in all the action, and interwoven with all the tissues and framework of society; that are fostered by the appetites, and braced up by the selfishness of individuals. These are potent, if not legitimate enemies. They perish in no mere external reformation; they yield to no physical force; they retire and diminish slowly before the constant efforts of labor and reason, of truth and prayer. And it is a great work not only to abol-

ish these, but to place in their stead a healthy public sentiment, a pure, heartfelt morality, a spirit of righteousness and of universal love.

Our own day witnesses movements, each of which is a portions of one grand Reform that aims at the advancement and purification of society, and through these at the welfare of the individual. The second Christian Law — the law of Love to universal man — is in the ascendant, and leads on the noblest efforts of our time. The sentiment of human brotherhood has called to the field of action those who labor for the abolition of all that injures humanity, and for the establishment of all that will secure its highest good. In their zeal and haste, it is quite probable, that the first Christian Law — the Law of Love to God — has been left somewhat out of view; that their *philanthropy* has lacked too much the element of *piety*; that *charity* may have been cherished to the exclusion of *reverence*; and this may account for some ultraisms and hindrances. But no one can look out upon the general course of things, and not be thankful for their tendency, and confident as to the result.

Prominent in this great Reform-effort of our time, is that great movement which, as its specific work, labors to abolish *Intemperance*, as one of the greatest of the evils that afflict and condemn humanity. In its course, this movement

comes in contact with all those strong and subtle adversaries which I have named ; with fierce and diseased appetites ; with selfishness deriving from these appetites, its most fruitful gains ; with customs centuries old ; with pride, and prejudice, and apathy. And we must expect, therefore, that the progress of the Temperance Cause will be slow and fitful ; now pushed forward with strange success ; now drooping and almost paralyzed by a re-action from the other side ; now meeting some heady current of opposition, checked, and almost beaten back ; now by the impulse of new energy, and the strength of aroused conviction, rallying and breaking the sturdy lines of the enemy.

Yet in none of these crises must we fear the grand result. The good is stronger than the evil. "The truth is mighty, and shall prevail." The waves of progress, now ebbing, now flowing, gain on the whole, and imperceptibly, yet surely, overcome the sandy barrier and even the rock-bound coast. For what is of God, and for humanity, is sure to triumph. No man can fail to observe that triumph, even at the point which the Temperance Cause now occupies. In order to appreciate that triumph, we must have a wide horizon. One year, or two, may furnish no very satisfactory result. But what says the experience of half a century ?

Is there not a great change in the tone of public sentiment during that period? *Then* the influence of strong drink was every where. It was in our churches, our beds, and our kneading-troughs. It crowned our public festivals, was in almost all our social customs, and prominent in our rites of hospitality. Now, at least, it is not so universal and so prominent, although it is yet so widely prevalent. It has retired somewhat from the open light of day; it is not entirely respectable to drink at the bar and the counter; at least there are those who shrink from this exposure behind red curtains and stained windows. The evil does not meet us every where. And to say nothing of the hundreds and thousands who have been redeemed, to say nothing of the organized effort and determined energy that have been enlisted in this cause, this fact that there is a change in public sentiment, although that sentiment is in much apathetic, and inactive, is to us a mark of progress, and deeply encouraging.

But, although this is our actual position and ground of encouragement in the Temperance movement, we have, just now, reached one of those crises to which I alluded, a crisis which bids us neither despond nor stop; but ask ourselves, with the utmost confidence that our cause is just, and must prevail, What do we need? what

must we now do? In short, what are the present Exigencies of the Temperance Cause? A few answers to this question will compose the remarks which I have to make at this time.

In the first place, then, let me say, that at the present crisis we need the *united action of all the friends of the Temperance Cause*. Outward success is apt to breed inward dissension. When the enemy is weak and dormant, we can take time to elect our method of attack, and to urge the claims of what we deem the most efficient instruments. But when the force of opposition thickens, and presses us imminently, we must push forward and attack in the best way we can — *push forward and attack!* that is the thing now to be done; and, as to instruments, each one must select what lies at hand, and what seems to him best. For my own part, I have been sorry to see so much time and talent wasted upon the discussion of *measures*, that should have been devoted to precious *action*. Not that the discussion of measures is unimportant. But this is to have only its due place and manner. When this discussion begets a party-feeling, and this course is strenuously maintained by one side, and that course by another side; and pride of opinion, and fondness of theory, take the place of warm, united, practical action, it is an evil time for the friends of Temperance within, and a cause of

rejoicing among its enemies without. This question of Law, or Moral Suasion, need not long be a question; let each lay hold of his favorite method and apply it; the practical result will decide their comparative efficacy better than a thousand debates. Let them be carried out in union; let them be wielded, shoulder to shoulder. The enemy press upon us, and we need every instrument of attack, and every true man. Whatever agent we employ, let it emanate from a common centre; from a dense, united front!

In the next place, I would remark, that *the Temperance Cause needs the enlistment and support of the wealthy and the influential*. It is too plain to be denied, and so plain as to excite us with all the energy of indignant rebuke, that the rich, the fashionable, the talented, and the powerful, stand between the Temperance movement and its triumph. They check our progress, they paralyze our hands, they strengthen the adversary, they keep open the gates through which this tide of desolation rolls in and overflows the land. Who else, let me ask, who else stands in our way? The intemperate masses; the slaves of appetite; the utter and abandoned drunkards? They afford no obstacle to the progress of this movement! They illustrate our arguments; they furnish our statistics; they constitute our most tremendous and effectual appeals. And while

thus "they point our moral," and afford us examples of that palpable nature to which we need hold up no mirror, they are capable of being redeemed, and God hath aided us and blessed our efforts to redeem them. Divide community into two classes, the utter drunkard on the one side, and the earnest, zealous friends of Temperance on the other, and how long would Intemperance be a fact in our world? Who, then, stand between the Cause and its triumph? The dealers in strong drink? Undoubtedly they do. While men are toiling with renewed effort, and praying with their armor on; while woman hopes, and prays, and weeps; while the redeemed fall back, and rise, and fall, and rise again; while every argument that can pierce to the heart, and every effort that can rouse the moral nature and reach the human; every law that stands in the Book of God; every rebuke and every warning that speaks from many-tongued experience; while all these are brought forward and urged by voices of eloquent pleading, of sound reason, of earnest rebuke; while every day, yea, every hour, we are shocked by some new developement of the evil of intemperance, and hopes are blasted, and hearts crushed, and homes made desolate, and minds wrecked, and souls darkened, and men slain; while violence, and weeping, and wo, because of this traffic, increase on every hand;

there are those who *will* feed the desolating flame, who open wide the doors of sin and death, who tempt the eye with splendid show, who mar God's image, and the soul for which Christ died, for less than thirty pieces.

But what do these dealers in strong drink tell us? Say they, "We never offer the cup to him who cannot hold it with a steady hand; we never *ask* men to drink; we never sell to the inebriate." Well may we ask them—Why do you not sell to the confirmed drunkard, and to him alone? Why tempt those who are comparatively free? Why perform the *initiator*y work which makes drunkards in the end? Why sow the seeds which shall ripen into appetite? Is not this worse, far worse, than to give strong drink to those who are already drunken? To pass the cup to those who are already confirmed in the brutality which it engenders? Is it not worse to deface the fair and complete statue, than to hack and hew that which is already marred and broken? Is it not worse to poison the clear spring, the pure stream at its source, than to mingle pollution with the tainted and turbid waters?

While, then, this plea of the dealers in strong drink, that they never sell to the drunkard, but only to the moderate and respectable, does not excuse them, it suggests the very fact which I am now urging. They do not sell to the con-

firmed drunkard; to whom, then, *do* they sell? Who sustain them? Who keep open their doors, and lend them all the respectability that remains to them? Evidently, those who are themselves respectable, the *wealthy*, the *fashionable*, the *influential*! And, if we go back to final causes, who then are the causes of the traffic? this dark, accursed traffic here, that opens its sluices all around us; that crams your warehouses, and with which huge ships come reeling to your wharves?

To make this point clearer, again I say, divide the community. Place on the one side the confirmed drunkards and the dealers in strong drink, and let all the rest be arranged on the other side as the active friends of Temperance, and how long would intemperance hold its seat in the land? I ask, then, once more, who *stand between* the Temperance movement and its triumph? And I answer, the wealthy, the fashionable, the influential! And undoubtedly it is so. *The Rum power in our country is backed up by the money power!* Mammon and Alcohol are hand in hand! I know there are exceptions to this proposition—I would not make it a sweeping one. I look around me, and see many noble laborers in this great and good cause. There are men who went forth in the early dawn of this Reformation, when the grey light first tinged the

mountain-tops, and the breathings of better things came like the morning-air. And they have labored until now, when the sun travels high towards the meridian, and the heat and burden of the day have come. And they *will* toil, without shrinking, without thought of abandoning the work, until they lay their bones on the field of their labor. There are, also, men of wealth willing to sacrifice, and prompt in self-denial. There are men of talent bending all their energies to the work. Woman, too, has lent it her aid, and given efficacy to its endeavors. And, here and there, men have been raised from the depths of sensualism and sin, and made the most powerful advocates against that evil to which so lately they were enslaved. And though by the machinations of enemies they may seem to have fallen, they shall yet go forth with new energy, and shake to its undoing this deep and cumbrous sin against which we strive.

But with all this qualification, I must repeat what I said just now, that the *majority* of the wealth, the fashion, and the power, in our land, upholds the means of intemperance, gives to the traffic all the respectability that yet adheres to it, and if it should withdraw its countenance that traffic could find no rest, no abiding-place among us, save in stealth and darkness, like those crimes which, banned and cast out of all worthy men,

lie only in secret and in shadow. *Is the wealth* of the land enlisted on the side of Temperance? Does that great death-stream run only through the hovels of the poor, and in the reeking channels of misery and vice? Lo, it flows through marble sluices, and drips from costly fonts! Are the *fashion* and *influence* of the land upon the side of Temperance? Behold those splendid hotels, those gilded saloons, those sumptuous wine parlors! Is the *talent* of the land upon the side of Temperance? See in how many of your legislative halls Bacchus sits crowned with his purple grapes, or mingles his drink for the eloquent and the great with the intellectual nectar of your public festivals. The talent of our land! I see it exerted in our caucusses and our legislative halls, in behalf of some question of monetary interest, of currency, or territory, but alas! I see too little of it enlisted for the highest interests of man! for the removal of that which mars and darkens the soul.

Advocate of *moral suasion*, have you force enough to penetrate and to arouse the hearts of those, who, in high places, in stations of power and influence, stand aloof from that work which is going on in behalf of degraded, suffering humanity — degraded and suffering to a fearful extent not only by their *apathy*, but by their example? Advocate of *legal force*, your law, if it is

worth any thing, must be the voice of public sentiment: behold! what a cordon of wealth, and talent, and influence, is drawn around this traffic. See how much of your public sentiment is here, weighing its casks of alcohol in one scale, with dollars in the other, or sipping its wine in luxurious ease.

I charge, then, and I deem justly, the wealth and the influence in our land, generally speaking, with being on the side of intemperance, at least, with being against Temperance, by encouraging the example of using strong drink, and by upholding the hands of those engaged in the traffic. And a word or two here, to some of that class who take the stand that because they are not drunkards, therefore they have nothing to do with the Temperance movement. They can drink, so they say, and it does not hurt them; they can use wine and ardent spirits moderately, and they wish no interference with their will and their habits. I leave all other replies to this position, and now make only this one — that those who take this stand do more hurt than the drunkard. They are the very examples which decoy and embolden others to drink. The miserable, bloated, wallowing inebriate furnishes no motive for the use of strong drinks. He causes those whose hands are stretched out to take the first glass, to shudder and recoil as they consider the

end to which that first glass may lead. Oh! if upon the drinking of that first glass all the evils of utter inebriety should at once ensue, how many, think you, would dare to taste it? But the young man, as he takes that glass, looks around, and sees those who boast that they can drink and it does not harm them; he sees them carry the cup to and from their lips with apparent safety, and he says, “So, too, can *I* drink with safety: I shall never be a drunkard;” and the spell is upon him. He drinks and falls, because another drinks and stands: he stumbles, not over the drunkard in the kennel, but over *his* example who says, “I can drink, and it does not harm me; I have no business with others nor they with me.” Oh! these are they who decoy others to their ruin — *have* they, then, no business with others, nor we with them? They are the wrecker’s lights, that allure many a brave and noble bark from its course, until it strikes the fatal rock, and lays its bones on the sand to whiten there amid the tempest and the surge! And has the Temperance Cause no claims upon them?

And have we not this claim upon all those who occupy stations of wealth and influence, that they use their power not to perpetuate and extend this evil, but to remove it? We say to them, that they are not merely apathetic in this matter, they exert a direct influence for evil, and our call

upon them is made not in the language of fanaticism, or of unreasonable interference, but is made to their reason and their conscience, in the name of God and of humanity. And with that God above them, laying his requirements upon them, with that humanity around them, bound to them by a relationship which no condition can annul or hide, who are they that they should wish to stand aloof from that effort to which we summon them? Who are they that they *dare* to set that example and uphold those agencies which to hundreds and thousands are so rife with shame, and sorrow, and wasting, and death! If for them Christ suffered and died, so did he suffer and die for their meanest brother yonder, covered as he is to the very lips with the leprosy of sin, and steeped in the kennel of sensuality! And if for them Christ died, who are they to be exempt from self-denial and from sacrifice for others?

Boston is truly the great city of enterprise, and prides herself upon the achievements which have been wrought by her people, when they have lent to the work their united energies, and their determined will. When its merchant-princes, its eloquent orators, its powerful people, say: "This, or that, shall be done!" it *is* done. They said so, when from across the waters, there came the attempt to impose upon them a tax without their

voice in voting that tax. "We will not have that tea yonder, which comes to us under that tax," said they. "It shall not enter our homes; it shall not touch our soil;" and the tea was scattered far and wide around your harbor. "We will do more than this," said they. "We will have liberty;" and with that word "*Liberty!*" they rocked old Faneuil Hall, and Faneuil Hall rocked the whole land, as with an earthquake; and liberty they had. Is any institution of art needed to adorn the city, to aid the improvement and pleasure of its people? Lo! it is erected. Is a railroad needed to join us with iron sinews, to the heart of the distant West. Lo! mountains are tunnelled, and rivers are bridged, and the railroad is built. And now, men of Boston, people of New England, why is it that this evil pollutes your streets, and disturbs your law and order, and sends forth its moral miasma into your homes, and harms and kills your fellows?

Is it not because those who lead the efforts and enterprise of other things, are lacking here? Where now are your *merchant-princes*? Alas! in the sumptuous parlor, and the grand hotel, they answer us with the tinkling of their wine-cups. Where now are your *eloquent orators*? men whose names have been synonymous with Liberty and patriotism — who have thrown the broad shield of their intellect before the constitu-

tion, and shaken senates with the force and lightning of their eloquence? Where are they? Alas, with the same strength, they hold open the gates of this traffic, and sustain the hands of those who scatter this desolation and this wo!

I say, then, once more, with the conviction that I cannot be refuted, that the wealth and the influence of our country, are not on the side of Temperance, and that in order to its triumph, we must have their earnest and hearty co-operation.

And inasmuch as it is the cause of God and humanity, to both of which they are amenable, I call upon them to come forward and act with us, in this crisis.

In the third place, I would remark, that the Temperance movement needs *the aid of young men*. The cause must soon depend entirely upon their efforts, as the older laborers in the field are now passing away. To them we must look to take up the work where those pioneers have left it, and carry it forward. But besides this, young men constitute the class which is most exposed to the evils of intemperance, and for whose welfare the Temperance effort has a special work. How many this very evening are reeling under the influence of strong drink, and employed in wasting the hopes and capacities of young and vigorous manhood? To us who

stand outside the charmed circle of temptation, it may seem strange that one can thus yield and thus fall. *We* see the serpent in the first glass. It is that which causes the wine to move; it is that which glides around in the beaded foam, and glitters upon the sparkling rim, as it presses the lips. We warn that infatuated young man, to beware of it, because it is so red; for there is treachery in that deep hue, it conceals the adder's sting; its attractiveness is the serpent's charm, deceiving the soul through the senses. But the delusion is upon him; the snare coils around him; the circles of that little wine-cup draw him down, slowly at first, then faster and yet faster, and are more mighty than the ridges of the awful maelstrom, that drag tall ships to destruction!

But the young man does not see this evil. He scouts the warning as the harping of the ascetic and the whim of the preacher, who would rob earth of its roses, and heaven of its stars, and throw the pall-like shadow of their gloomy imaginations over the sunshine of innocent pleasure; and thus drowns the warning in the sentiment of the epicurean and the wit of the bacchanal.

In the fourth place, the cause of Temperance needs the *influence and action of religion*. I am not prepared to deny that the Temperance Cause has been carried forward with too much irrever-

ence, too little dependence upon God. We must keep near Him, and draw our strength from Him. We should look to God, as the source and the power of every moral movement.

But not only do we need the influence and action of religion, but we need the help of those who profess to be religious men. Especially do we call for the aid of the Ministers of the Gospel. I do not agree with those who charge the Ministers, as a class, with hindering the progress of the cause. It is not so. As a class, the Ministers are as active and energetic as any other class. But their position requires that they should be more so. They, of all men, should not sit down in ease, while humanity is suffering. They, of all men, should not, by the use of wine or strong drink, furnish an occasion of evil to their fellow-men. There was one of old, whom they would not accuse of ultraism or fanaticism. He had labored and suffered for Christ and for humanity. He was beaten and shipwrecked, scourged and imprisoned. He bore about in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. But he never shrunk from any sacrifice; he never let ease stand between him and duty. Hear, then, what this noble, self-sacrificing preacher of the Gospel, the venerable Paul said: "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth; lest I make my brother to offend."

In conclusion, *each individual should feel his responsibility in this matter.* This is a subject to be pondered by the individual reason, the individual conscience, the individual heart. I leave the matter in the court of conscience. Let each one consider the claims of duty, and act upon them. As for those who have already enlisted in this movement, they must toil and fight to the last. There "is no discharge in this war." Let not those who are opposed to the Temperance Cause, imagine that we shall yield or give back. And let us not be discouraged, though during the past year there has been a fearful retrogression. This reform has not gone so far forward itself, to come to nought. The good is mightier than the evil. It is the cause of God, the cause of humanity, and it will triumph. We must stand firm. We must press forward. The Cross is upon our shoulders. We look forward to the field that lies before us — to the needy, suffering humanity that calls us. We look up to God for His blessing and His aid. Forward, in the name of God and humanity — forward ! May He direct and help us.



